

Contributions

CARTHAGE MUST BE DESTROYED

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Rather a strange caption for an article in a religious journal but it will serve the purpose I have in view. "It points a moral and adorns a tale."

Old Cato, one of republican Rome's greatest senators and statesmen, conceived the idea that the perpetuity of Rome's power required the destruction of her rival, the great city of Carthage. The senate and people of Rome were oblivious or indifferent to their danger. Cato wanted to arouse them, so on any and all occasions he pressed the subject to their notice. In the midst of the most serious of all the senate's engagements he would interject the following motion, "Mr. President, I move you sir that Carthage must be destroyed." In the heat of debate he would "move you sir that Carthage must be destroyed." At the banquets he would speak the sentiment that "Carthage must be destroyed." On the street he would hail his brother politicians with the declaration that "Carthage must be destroyed." He kept at it till the heart of Rome was aroused and Carthage was destroyed and Rome was saved.

Even so "the institutions of the church must be endowed." Our salvation as individuals and as an organization requires that "the institutions of the church be endowed." God requires that we as his stewards "endow the institutions of the church." As we love God, let us "endow the institutions of the church." If we do not "endow the institutions of the church," the wealth of the brotherhood will work their damnation.

Make the institutions of the church an equal beneficiary with your children in the final distribution of your estate. While you live "endow the institutions of your church" so that its blessing will come into your own life. Brethren, I move that we "endow the institutions of the church." I hear Brother Cassel's second to the motion. The Moderator, our blessed Lord, approves the motion and it is carried.

THE FUNCTION OF THE MINISTRY

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There can be no doubt that the function of the ministry changes from age to age. Failure to appreciate this has caused many a man to pass the dead line in the ministry before he had really reached it from any other cause. But these changes are concerned with the methods of the ministry and not with its fundamental principles. Principles are universal, eternal and unchangeable. With such principles the ministry has to do. It must seek to apply them to the hearts and lives of men and to the problems of society. It is these principles that give unity to the church and make it our one abiding institution. For the defense and propagation of these principles the ministry is set. It is

commanded neither to change them, nor ignore them nor substitute others for them. It is the means chosen of God thru which these principles are to be made effective in the whole earth.

Here is the function of the ministry. These principles must be applied in every age by the ministry of that age. The methods of application, however, will not necessarily be the same in every age. In fact church methods should be very elastic. They should be adapted to the peculiar needs of each church. Sin does not present the same battle front in every age. Old foes of the Christian faith will present themselves with new faces. These the ministry must be able to perceive at once and adopt methods of work that shall overcome them. Jesus said to the ministry, "Be wise as serpents." And again he said, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." We can not escape the conclusion that methods of applying the gospel of Jesus Christ must differ in different ages; and happy is the church and the ministry that has the ability and the spirit to adapt its methods to changed conditions. How many churches and pastors fail here! How many churches and pastors who because of this are not in touch with the age! The writer of this article was one day riding with a business man, and made inquiry about the Brethren church located near his place of business. The man responded saying, that the church was a "back number." It is a sin for a man or a church to be behind the age. Let the church and its ministry appreciate this and we will no longer lament the separation of the church and the masses.

But the ministry has a special function to fill in the church; and if we ask what that function is we must certainly find our answer in the light and practices of the New Testament.

In the first place the minister is not a priest. The New Testament scriptures nowhere speak of him as standing between God and man to mediate between them. There is no ground whatsoever for the sacerdotal theory of the ministry. Dr. Fairbairn well says, "That in all that is said concerning the office, in the words of our Lord or his apostles, not a hint is dropped which would bespeak for the ministers of the gospel the character of a secret-loving, wonder-working priesthood." The ministry was never commissioned to offer sacrifices. The minister is a successor not in the *priestly* but in the *prophetic* office. He is not made the dispenser of gifts of grace given him for that purpose. His church is not so much a *temple* as a *synagogue*. He is first and always a teacher of divine truth. This is his message from age to age. To make this truth known to men and to apply it to their hearts and lives is the supreme function of the Christian ministry. For this purpose Christ came and to the same end the ministry is called and sent forth by him. "As the Father sent me, so I send you." The ministry of today

needs to appreciate this truth. Judging from much of the present sermonic literature one would be led to conclude that the function of the ministry was either to interest or entertain on the one hand and on the other to construct comprehensive systems of Philosophy and Theology. The world and the church needs nothing so much at present as teachers of the word of God. Growth in grace, whether in the individual or in the church depends upon the word of God. Here is the sole foundation for a permanent and active Christian life. Let the ministry at once become a teaching body; then shall the church receive a mighty uplift and multitudes will come seeking food and shelter within her bosom.

The minister is not a *politician*. He is not sent to govern either in the church or state. That minister makes a serious mistake that carries his authority and influence into the political world. His kingdom is not of this world; his is a kingdom of truth and love. Experience and history alike teach that when ministers have tried to "run" the world they have generally made poor business of it. In all such instances too the church has suffered as well as society. This does not mean that the minister is to wholly separate himself from the world and men outside the church. The minister does not by virtue of his office cease to be a private citizen; and as a private citizen he may take part in political discussions, attend the primaries and vote, but even these, especially the first two, he would better do cautiously, if at all. The minister is more than a *Reformer*. He has given him a grander mission than the *reformation of society*, namely, the *regeneration of society*. The gospel of the kingdom has been committed to him. God is organizing a divine society in the earth, whose walls are salvation and whose gates are praise. Jesus is the rightful king of society; and it is only when men learn to conform their political and industrial order to his teaching that they will find peace and true progress. To advance this kingdom in the hearts of men is the work of the ministry. This a greater and more permanent work than a participation in politics; for to inspire in men a higher spirit of justice and love toward their fellow-men, and of purity and patriotism is a nobler work than to dictate a party platform or influence political nominations.

It is not the function of the ministry to attract congregations by eloquent orations. A minister's power does not depend upon his skill as a Rhetorician or Elocutionist. The great orators of the world are few and the great orations yet fewer. It is reasonable to suppose that if God would have the world saved by orators our supply would be increased. These attainments are almost indispensable to ministerial success; but the preacher that is ambitious of eloquence will certainly prove a failure. The church is somewhat to blame if men set their minds too much upon eloquence and Rhetoric. The